



Statement of Senator Feinstein on Burma's NLD Decision to
Boycott Constitutional Convention
May 14, 2004

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) issued the following statement today on the decision by the National League for Democracy (NLD) to boycott the National Convention in Burma.

“With the ruling Junta’s refusal to free Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of Burma’s National League for Democracy, it now appears that the NLD will boycott that country’s constitutional convention on May 17. Both Suu Kyi and Tin Oo, the vice chairman of the NLD, have been in custody for nearly a year and their freedom had been a condition of joining the convention.

Once again, Suu Kyi has acted courageously, and I fully support the decision to boycott the sham convention, which Burma’s ruling junta has sought to portray as a step forward in democracy. As evidenced by her continued captivity, the junta does not appear serious about taking any steps toward democracy.

I also urge the Senate to take up and pass as soon as possible a resolution introduced by Senator McConnell and me to renew the sanctions imposed on Burma by the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

Last year, in response to a brutal and vicious coordinated assault by pro-government paramilitary thugs on members of the NLD and Suu Kyi’s arrest, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 to impose a complete import ban on products from Burma for one year.

Working together, Congress and the Administration demonstrated our determination to put pressure on the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to release Suu Kyi, respect the 1990 elections decisively won by the NLD and put Burma on an irreversible path of national reconciliation and democracy. One year later, it is clear that the SPDC has failed to make ‘substantial and measurable progress’ toward implementing a democratic government to have those sanctions lifted.”

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